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Fall Cleaning Opportunities

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Fall Cleaning Opportunities

With autumn comes cooler temperatures and the opportunity to work in the yard. *Cleaning out gutters and disposing of leaves are a few things to take care of during the fall season.*

The City of Dexter does have ordinances about blowing your leaves into the street and burning leaves in the street. City Administrator, Mark Stidham, stressed that blowing leaves into the street isn't a good idea because they clog storm drains and catch basins causing flooding and preventing water from being filtered properly.

Because of the dry summer months, early leaf fall is expected and autumn could bring the possibility of heavy rain.

Rake up those thick layers of leaves routinely to prevent wet layers from suffocating the grass below. Leaves and yard debris can be bagged and placed out for pickup by the City once a month. The number to call for pickup is 624-5527 to schedule. *(Large appliances will be picked up for \$10 but some recycle people will pick them up for free. Couches and other household items will be picked up but require a red tag that can be purchase for \$1.00 at City Hall or Harps.)*

Another alternative is to use a mulching mower to shred them into fine pieces or place in a compost pile. They are an excellent source of nutrients and organic matter for a winter blanket for flowerbeds. Mulching around trees should look like a donut, not a volcano. Pulling the mulch away from the trunk a bit makes it less of a home and meal for voles, chipmunks and mice during the winter.

Another project might be pruning dead wood from trees. While it is always best to get a professional for this job, some do-it-yourselfers tackle this project themselves. Trimming trees requires safety first. Perching on the top step of any ladder is not smart. Limit your climb to the second rung from the top. It's important to keep branches from touching or hanging over a house. Ants and other insects can crawl onto the house on these branches. In addition, mold may grow on the house if a tree or bush causes too much

shade. However, pruning promotes growth, and you don't want to encourage growth when trees are preparing to go dormant for winter. Save that project until early spring, along with cutting back roses.

If you over-seed your lawn heavily enough with the cool-season grass, such as Kentucky bluegrass, fescues and perennial ryegrass, you should be able to achieve a nearly solid green lawn all winter long. The best time to over-seed is 6-8 weeks before the first hard freeze. If you notice bare spots once the seeds begin to germinate, seed those areas again.

Fertilizer should be applied modestly the last of September and again around Thanksgiving. Keep in mind that even if over-seeding results are less than perfect, you can always re-seed during the spring.

This is also the time for planting/transplanting trees or shrubs and spring flowering bulbs. Continue to water trees and shrubs until the ground freezes if there is not sufficient rain.

Remember to store and protect your equipment. Winterize mowers, drain hoses and put into storage. Clean and oil hand tools to prevent rusting before you put them away for the winter.

Have fun with your fall yard work. Remember, it's good exercise as well as keeping things orderly and getting ready for spring.

Story Courtesy of Debbie Stidham

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